

SENATOR WITHEM: Yes, Mr. President and members of the body, I am supportive of Senator Barrett's amendment. As a matter of fact, I wouldn't object if you did vote for this just as a favor to the Speaker. I think that would be...any reason for voting for this, I think, would be an acceptable reason. I think it is a good valid thing to do when we're sitting here with just a very, very few days left, three days after today. Taxpayers of our state send us down here to attempt to resolve some problems. What we have now on Final Reading are, in a number of cases, the legislators' best attempts at providing solutions to a number of problems that they see in the state. We are, more so than I have ever seen since I've been down here, very much in danger of not getting a final consideration by the Legislature of a lot of hard work put into by a lot of senators on a lot of different proposals. It's not unusual for us to reach a gridlock. It's happened any number of times since I've been here; LB 775, the Christian school bill, any number of other issues...the home school bill, excuse me, not the Christian school bill, the budget one year. The difference between this session and any other is always at other times there has been kind of a sort of coming together of the body where we may continue to differ on specific proposals but we decide, as a group, that it is important for the legislative process to continue onward. It doesn't seem to be happening this year. Unfortunately, the pro-life, pro-choice controversy has come to dominate almost every other phase of our consideration. And even bills totally unrelated to that issue find themselves being filibustered in an attempt not to get to the pro-life, pro-choice issue that is following and that's really unfortunate, I think. It's unfortunate because we, as a body, really, the thing that keeps us together is a precious sort of respect for each others' views and a willingness to fight as hard as we can for our individual position but at a given time in our process to come together and allow the majority viewpoint to be expressed. I think that the motion that Senator Barrett is offering will allow us to do that. Obviously, I'm speaking because LB 1059 is one of those bills that is on this list. Obviously, I care a great deal about that bill. But you should not vote for this or against this merely based on your views on 1059. There are a lot of other good pieces of legislation here that do deserve to be considered. If you don't like a given bill, including 1059, you have one very real option and that is the red button. Vote no on a proposition if you don't like it. But I think we're at a point where extraordinary measures are needed to assure that we do, in fact, give final consideration to all of these proposals